

# IRELAND IN TUDOR TIMES



An artist's impression of the town of Newry in the later 16th century.  
This is based on the Robert Lythe map of Newry, c.1570s.

Courtesy of The Newry & Mourne Museum

## A Study Pack for Schools

*Teacher Notes and Worksheets included*

# Ireland in Tudor Times

## Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Page 1</b>
<b>1. A Changing Way of Life 1485-1603</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. Irish Life &amp; Customs</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. Law &amp; Order in Ireland in Tudor Times</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4. Tower Houses and Fortified Dwellings</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>5. Sir Nicholas Bagenal</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>6. Sir Henry Bagenal</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>7. The Great Hugh O'Neill</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>8. Flight of the Earls</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>9. Bibliography</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>10. Acknowledgements</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>11. Associated Activity cards</b>	<b>27</b>

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

August 2013

Welcome to Bagenal's Castle and enjoy your day. Please use this pack to increase your knowledge of the castle's fascinating history but, if you happen to have picked it up else-where, I hope you will be encouraged to pay a visit to the castle sometime soon.

The 'Ireland in Tudor Times' educational pack is the work of the Shared Learning Projects (SLP) group of North Down and Ards University of the Third Age and of our fellow U3A members in Newry. We are part of a worldwide self-help voluntary educational organisation for retired people who 'still have a lot of living to do'. In conjunction with the Newry Museum, we have been very busy over the past few months researching, planning, discussing and writing the material for the work-cards and for the accompanying book for teachers and other interested adults. An Elizabethan Trail round the Newry area devised by Newry U3A is available from the Museum, who helped with some of the ideas.

A very amusing play 'Hugh and Mabel', was written in pantomime style by Charlie Combe, one of our members, and subsequently acted to great effect on two occasions. Copies are available on request as drama or play-reading groups may consider producing it themselves. We found it a very enjoyable experience which helped in a way to transport us back to the Tudor period and to understand more fully life in Ireland at that time. Ruth Houston, another of our members compiled a CD of Elizabethan music to accompany the play. Sadly we cannot release it for copyright reasons but a selection of contemporary compositions could certainly enhance your production.

We have aimed the work-cards at the lower secondary school age group, but you may find much of the material appeals to older or younger children too. Through the cards, we have endeavoured to interest students in their immediate surroundings and the wealth of history to be found there. The activities which accompany each card are designed to encourage original thought and to promote understanding and enjoyment.

We conceived 'Ireland in Tudor Times' for many reasons. The cynics may say it was to keep the old folk off the streets but we see it as a little more than that. By producing it, we hope to bring about a better understanding, among people both young and old, of the cultural differences and underlying tensions in Tudor Ireland and how that period's events and thinking have influenced current attitudes. Hopefully this may encourage them to challenge some of the myths and prejudices expressed in many communities today and lead to the building of a shared society where diversity is accepted and tolerance is the norm.

I'd like to thank the many people who worked so hard to produce '**IRELAND IN TUDOR TIMES**'

\* **My team in North Down and Ards U3A:** Adrienne Brown, Grace Burnside, Charlie Combe, Peter Croft, Ruth Houston, Ronnie McClements, Rosemary Murray and Geoff Reeves, not forgetting the team of actors who took part in the play.

\* **The Newry U3A Team:** Pat Cunningham, Mary Dynan, Mavis, Peter O'Hanlon and Chris Roberts, ,

\***The Staff of Bagenal's Castle/ Newry and Mourne Museum, particularly:** Curator Noreen Cunningham, Deputy Curator Ken Abraham and Education Officer Declan Carroll.

There were many others who helped us reach our goal. I'd like to thank them all but particularly the committees of North Down and Ards and Newry U3As: the Northern Ireland Regional U3A and the officers of the UK National U3A, all of whom in many ways, financially or otherwise, have helped us to make this pack possible.

**Thank you all very much indeed .**

**Joyce Gibson**

**University of the Third Age (U3A) SLP group leader North Down and Ards U3A & Northern Ireland Regional Contact for SLPs**

The Tudor period in Ireland was a period of unsettling and turbulent change. The English saw the Irish as savages or uncouth barbarians and had no conception of the complex and cultured way of life in the Gaelic world at that time.

The Crown sought to “civilise” the native Irish population by imposing the English way of life, its law and customs. Their aim was to bring order to Gaelic society and thus establish English rule throughout the land. The achievement of this aim would also ensure that Ireland would not be used in the future for a base for French or Spanish invasion of England.

## ***There were three main strategies in the Tudor plan to anglicize Ireland:-***

- 1 to establish the new “reformed” religion
- 2 to weaken the Gaelic clan system
- 3 to increase the power of the English overlords

## **Religious Reform**

When Henry the Eighth broke away from the Church of Rome and subsequently declared himself head of the English Church in Ireland in the Act of Supremacy in 1534, he struck a death blow to the medieval way of life in Gaelic Ireland. The English Government decided to take more direct control of Ireland and a new period of colonisation began.

At that time church establishments, monasteries, convents and priories provided education, medical and pastoral care for the communities they served. They also provided a refuge for the destitute. When they were disbanded there were dire consequences. Hospitals and schools closed throughout Ireland and the poor were left to roam the land, suffering deprivation and even starvation.

These religious reforms rapidly caused the Irish way of life, which had evolved over the past generations, to be overthrown. Later in the century, during the reign of Edward VI and then Elizabeth I, the Protestant church was finally established in Ireland.

## **The Decline of the Gaelic Clan System**

In 1541 Henry the Eighth declared himself King of Ireland. His ingenious “Surrender and Regrant” policy, introduced in 1542, was his way to persuade the Gaelic chieftains to submit to the king and then be regranted their lands on the condition that they abandoned their own law and customs and introduced English Common Law and customs in the areas which they controlled.

This was a direct assault on the Irish way of life and these constraints were a constant source of anger and irritation to the people of the lands where the Chieftains had accepted this policy. They stubbornly refused to accept the “new” religion, preferring their own beliefs and customs and were loathe to submit to the new English Common law since the Brehon law, for which they had great respect, had served them well in the past.

Although the Chieftains saw “surrender and regrant” as the only way to retain the land, the members of the clans viewed this as a loss of **their** land, since under Brehon law the land was owned by the whole clan and not just by the Chieftain.



In the end it greatly weakened the Chieftains' authority among their own people. Also, the new administration constantly imposed new and more stringent restrictions on the Chiefs and these continual compromises eventually led to a decline of their power and even, in some cases, to the dispossession of their land.

### **The Increasing Power of the English Tenants**

As a result of the "Dissolution of the Monasteries", the English government had vast stretches of land at their disposal. Many of the tenancies were awarded to "servitors" that is soldiers, especially army commanders, who had served in the English forces during the Irish wars. These leases of land were given in acknowledgement of their service and loyalty to the Crown. In return the new tenants had to swear allegiance to the Crown, promise to administer justice, improve the land, develop trade and establish the new, reformed religion. They also pledged to maintain a number of armed troops to enforce law and order and to be available to the King, if and when he needed them.

The distribution of these church lands to loyal tenants provided the English with the means to further impose and promote the English way of life in the lands under their jurisdiction.

The new English landowners became the landed gentry and soon set about establishing themselves, building castles and fortified houses, sometimes on the very sites of the abbeys or monasteries they had supplanted.

In time the English settlers introduced new, improved methods of farming, developed trade agreements and gave their support to initiatives which began to fill the great gaps in religion, education and community care which had previously been provided by the church establishment.

### **Consequences of the Tudor Policies**

The strict enforcement of these radical reforms was only possible in some areas since it was not until the seventeenth century that England gained control of the whole of Ireland. However in the areas concerned these strategies resulted in the indigenous population undergoing a complete change in their lifestyle, despite their extreme reluctance to do so. This was a time of confusion and chaos for them and their unwilling acceptance of the new regime would be reflected in their future dealings with the "colonial" government. This bitter conflict between two very different cultures resonates down the centuries and is still evident in Ireland today.

### **Ireland in Tudor Times: A Study Course for Year 9 Pupils**

In this course of study we look at the eventful Tudor period by examining the history of one of the first English settlers in Ireland, Sir Nicholas Bagenal and his family, who, in 1552, were given the lease of land in Newry formerly owned by the Cistercian abbey there.

When his son, Sir Henry Bagenal, who succeeded him as Marshall of the King's Army in Ireland, came into dispute with one of the greatest Gaelic chieftains, Hugh O'Neill, the Earl of Tyrone, the inevitable conflict resulted in the Nine Years' War, the defeat of the Irish forces and the Flight of the Earls, one of the most pivotal events in the history of Ireland, leading as it did to the Plantation of Ulster by James the First.

Sections on the law, lives and customs of the two cultures help to paint a picture of everyday life in Tudor Ireland at that time.

# IRISH LIFE AND CUSTOMS IN TUDOR TIMES

When Henry the Eighth sought to regain control over Ireland he saw his attempt to re-colonise the country as the introduction of English “civility” against Irish “savagery”.

What he failed to realise was the fact that Gaelic Ireland had its own highly organised and sophisticated way of life.

The Roman Conquest had not extended to Ireland so the Gaelic inhabitants were able to develop their own unique culture without the impact of Roman culture or civilisation.

In the fifth century Ireland was converted to Christianity by missionaries from Great Britain such as Saint Patrick. This change had a profound effect on the Irish but they adapted to it without losing their Gaelic roots.

When the Pope granted King Henry the Second [William the Conqueror’s grandson] the right to rule Ireland in the twelfth century, vast tracts of land were parcelled out to the Anglo Norman lords, many of whom adopted Irish ways and customs.

By the fifteenth century English authority was centred on an area on the eastern coast round the city of Dublin, known as the “Pale”. This consisted of the four “obedient” counties of Louth, Meath, Kildare and county Dublin. Here the Anglo Normans had established an outpost of English culture and administration.

When Henry VIII created a new “Reformation Parliament” in 1536 the old powerful Anglo Norman lords in Ireland became known as the “Old English”. They retained their Roman Catholic religion and resisted the changes introduced by the new regime.

## Differences in the Irish and the English way of life in Tudor Ireland

The advent of Henry VIII’s Irish Reformation policies brought about an inevitable clash of the two cultures. Each had their own distinctive and highly defined way of life -- each one seemingly incomprehensible to the other.

### Government

Gaelic Ireland was ruled by Chieftains who ruled their clans like independent princes. Each Lord established law and order within their own separate kingdoms, maintaining their own moral codes within the Brehon law system.

In the English dominated counties there was a strong central government built on English Common Law and practice. The Irish Parliament consisted of English nobles and senior churchmen but the Parliament was only allowed to meet with the King’s consent. In 1536 new legislation was introduced for the “Dissolution of the Monasteries” and, four years later, the “Act of Supremacy “. These measures caused the “Old English” [the Anglo Norman Catholic lords] and the Gaelic Irish, once bitter enemies, to become unlikely allies against the new English administration.

### Settlements

Most Gaelic people in the 16th century lived in small rural settlements, migrating in Spring and Summer to fresh pastures in the hills to graze their cattle, in a system known as “creaghting “.

English people in Tudor times lived in ways which were very similar to those of similar status in England. This was especially noticeable in the “ Pale” where towns had

been established by the early settlers. Houses and churches were built in the English style and this area had truly become an outpost of English culture. However, in the frontier regions, fortified castles and houses were still constructed to provide security against the marauding Irish raiders.

## Trade

In Gaelic society there was no currency. A system of bartering prevailed with livestock, foodstuff and “payment in kind” used in trade negotiations. The Irish exported hides, wool and linen to their neighbours on the continent, receiving in return salt, iron, wine, spices and other goods unavailable in Ireland. In Tudor times there was a gradual shift from this bartering economy to a money based system.

Towns in the English areas had highly organised trade systems. Market places were established by the early settlers. The lucrative wool and linen trade with England meant that the merchants prospered. All trade and administration was carried out in English. The use of the Irish language was frowned upon.

## Social structures

By Tudor times Gaelic culture had developed a complex social structure. At the highest level was the chieftain. Next in rank came the men of art and learning such as the jurists, priests, educators, bards, poets, musicians and craftsmen. At the next level were the leaseholders of land. At the bottom of the pile were the peasantry who were not slaves in the feudal sense but had very few rights in the social system.

It is evident that the Irish people held their artists and craftsmen in great esteem. Their culture was a rich mix of poetry, music and storytelling. Their craftsmen were also highly prized : their love of ornamentation apparent in metalwork, pottery and other everyday things made into beautiful works

of art, which we can still see today. 5

King Henry VIII had proclaimed himself not only the head of state in Ireland but also head of the church. The Lord Deputy, who lived in Dublin Castle, was his representative in Ireland and the Members of Parliament were English nobles, wealthy landowners , influential merchants and churchmen from the newly established Anglican Church. The development of new towns in the loyal counties resulted in an important immigration of tradesmen and artisans. Ports and dockyards were established in the coastal towns.

In 1592 Queen Elizabeth set up the University of Trinity College in Dublin in the grounds of a former monastery as a college for the sons of the Protestant gentry. This venture established the city as a centre for learning and culture.

Although many English people in the upper and middle classes in Ireland experienced a significant rise in their living standards at this time there were a great number of poor and destitute people living there in near starvation conditions. This was in part due to the closing of the monasteries and the loss of the services they had provided. The insanitary conditions also caused outbreaks of the plague which resulted in many thousands of deaths.

Intermarriage between English settlers and the Irish was not socially acceptable nor was the adoption of Irish style and customs. e.g. Irish men wore their hair long whilst Englishmen kept theirs short. Any man with long hair was therefore suspected of having succumbed to the Irish way of life. Similarly if a person spoke in the Irish language it was taken to be a declaration of their Irish nationality.

**The sixteenth century was a turbulent time for both the indigenous Irish people and their English conquerors and was to remain so for many generations to come.**

## IRISH LIFE & CUSTOMS: NOTES ON WORKCARDS 1 & 2

Much of the information used for the students' work-cards can be found in two of the books named in the bibliography, 'A History of Ireland in 250 episodes' by Jonathan Bardon and Winifred Glover's 'Exploring the Spanish Armada'. Both books include a chapter on Ireland at the time of the Armada and have quoted Captain de Cuellar extensively. They are both very readable and provide an excellent background.

Winifred, who worked for many years in History Education section of the Ulster Museum, has also included many very interesting illustrations. In part four of her book she tells us that the principal wine importing port in Tudor times was Galway. Exports from Spain and Portugal were sent on to England, Wales and Scotland. England recognised the importance of Ireland 'as a trading neighbour and a strategic naval base' as they feared the possibility of a European conquest of Ireland with resulting serious consequences to this trade.

Her remarks concerning the twelfth century Anglo-Norman settlers in the Pale were also interesting. She points out that the settlers had long felt under threat from the English regarding land ownership and constantly blew hot and cold as regards their loyalty to the Crown. Henry's desire to establish a Protestant church throughout Ireland did not please them as they wished above all to remain loyal to the Catholic Church.

At the time of de Cuellar's journey this animosity to the English had largely died down. As very severe consequences would result if aid were offered to a Spaniard, he would have often found great difficulty in finding help, however he did find shelter with MacClancey of Rosclogher Castle, Co. Leitrim who was in constant conflict with the English. When eventually MacClancey was threatened by an imminent attack and was obliged to escape to the hills, de Cuellar with eight companions defended the castle for 17 days. Bad weather eventually obliged the English attackers to retreat and the owner returned. The 'Brave Spaniard's' reputation was greatly enhanced by this episode.

Early in 1589 de Cuellar set off for the Antrim Coast in the hope of meeting up with his kinsmen but then heard of the sad fate of the Girona. He was obliged to wait in a Co. Antrim village where, being a great womaniser, he amused himself *'with some very beautiful girls with whom I was friendly'*.

With the help of Redmond Gallagher, the Bishop of Derry, a boat was eventually found to take him and his companions to Scotland, a truly remarkable escape.

When studying Tudor Ireland, I found a visit to Carlingford, very near Newry, extremely valuable. Paul Gosling's excellent guide book '**Carlingford Town: an Antiquarian's Guide**' obtainable from Carlingford Heritage Centre **Carlingford, Co. Louth** was a great help.

### Answers to worksheet questions 6

**Card 1** *Dissolution* **G:** anglicise **A:** tenants **H:** counterparts **D:** systematically **B:** jeopardy **E:** the continent **f:** the Pale **c.**

**Card 2** *Whey* **B:** the right to **E:** bonnyclabber **A:** mantle **C:** decreed **F:** keep warm and dry **D**



# LAW AND ORDER IN IRELAND IN TUDOR TIMES

## *The Irish Law System*

Prior to English rule Ireland had its own system of **Brehon law** dating from Celtic times. These laws were first written down in the seventh century. The laws were a civil rather than a criminal code and regulated all ranks of society, establishing and defining social status and the rights and duties that went with it, relating to property, inheritance and other areas of responsibility.

The concept of state administered punishment was not recognised since there was no central authority. Each Lord or Chief was responsible for administering the law in his own territory with the help of the Brehon, a learned man who knew the Ancient Laws and could advise him in legal matters. This system was developed to suit the needs of the society which it regulated and it worked because the Irish people had great respect for justice and the law.

**Brehon law** continued to be used long after the Norman and English invasions, even though in 1204 King John had ordered that the Irish should keep to the Common Law and customs of the English courts

**Brehon law** is based on the **ancient Irish law texts**.

## *The English Law System*

**English Common Law** is based on “**precedents**”. That is, it is based on legal decisions in previous cases which serve as a rule in future similar cases.

### **Land Tenure**

According to Brehon law, ownership of the land belonged **not** to the Ruler or Chief but to the Clan as a whole.

According to English law a person who claimed ownership of land must prove that it was lawfully his, despite the fact that his ancestors had occupied it for generations. Many of the land claims by the Irish were doomed to failure since no written proof was available. Irish law relied on verbal contracts not written ones. A person’s word was his bond. Consequently the land was confiscated by the Crown and the rightful owners thrown off their land. The dispossessed Irish took to the woods as outlaws and plundered their former lands and homesteads.

Hugh O’Neill’s grandfather, Conn, was one of the first Irish chieftains to take up the offer of “**Surrender and Regrant**” from the government of the day. This was a system whereby all his lands were given to the English Crown and then returned to him by titles valid in English law. This was his way of attempting to balance the native tradition of law with the new system of English government in order to retain his land and possessions.

## Succession of the Lord or Chieftain

Under Brehon law the successor was chosen by the previous Chieftain. This was not necessarily the first-born male child but the one **he** decided would be the most worthy leader after he died. Not only his sons, but first, second and even third cousins were also eligible to inherit. There was no **obvious** inheritor and on the death of the Lord this often led to in-fighting by the contesting relatives battling for supremacy – a question of every man for himself.

For example Turlough O'Neill was named by Conn O'Neill as his successor even though Hugh O'Neill was the first born male child. A long bitter rivalry for the title dominated the scene for many years after Conn's death. During these years the English supported Hugh and Turlough at different times hoping to "divide and conquer" the contestants and thus dilute their power. It was not until 1585 that the English Parliament finally conferred the title of Earl of Tyrone on Hugh O'Neill.

## Property

In English law the first born male inherited all the family's property – called **primogeniture**. This law was enforced by a strong central government.

In Brehon law the property was divided among **all the males**, the eldest had the task of dividing up the estate – even illegitimate children received a portion.

A man's word was his bond.

## Marriage

With their parents' permission boys were legally allowed to marry at 14 years and girls at 12 years under English law. There was no written rule in Irish law.

In English law the wife became the property of her husband once she was

married, as did any property she owned. Under Brehon law women had equal property rights before and after marriage. In fact, neither husband nor wife could sell or otherwise interfere with the property of the other.

In English law divorce was extremely difficult but in Irish law either of the marital partners could divorce the other and still retain their property rights in the same ratio as when they married.

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## Religion

Irish Catholics were constantly demanding the right to practice their own religion – at the same time avowing their loyalty to the English Crown. However the English Government perceived its Catholic subjects as owing allegiance to a foreigner, the Pope. Increasingly more constraints were enforced by English law on the Irish, restricting religious and civil liberties. This was an attempt by the Government to establish conformity to the Protestant Faith and to the English Common law and customs.

Such constraints became a constant provocation to the Irish who at times were forced to pay lip service to these demands in order to maintain their livelihood and homes.

## Hugh O'Neill and the Law of the Land

Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, was a master at playing both sides for his own purposes. In 1590 when he was accused by the English of hanging his cousin with his own hands he was exonerated. He pleaded that he had executed an evildoer who had committed murder and that it was the Irish custom to thus defend their country. His defence was that he was acting within the Gaelic law tradition.

Although Hugh O'Neill ruled the Earldom of Tyrone under English law, by the 1590's he had quietly amassed a powerful army by flouting the restrictions imposed by English government rule.

**How did he accomplish this?**

**Firstly**, he was legally permitted to retain a fixed number of men to defend his land but after he had completed the training of one batch he recruited a new group and started again. By continually using this ploy he soon had the whole male population of his territory trained into highly disciplined soldiers who were excellent marksmen and sharp shooters.

**Secondly**, he was only allowed to import a certain amount of ammunition at any one time but, on the pretext of roofing his castle, he obtained a large quantity of lead, under licence, and proceeded to make it into bullets for his muskets. He also smuggled arms and ammunition into his territory and made caches of them in various secret places close at hand so that they could be recovered easily

**Thirdly**, he continually extended his sphere of influence over the neighbouring Irish Chieftains, east beyond Lough Neagh, south below the Blackwater River and west into Monaghan. He was constantly firming up alliances with the local Chiefs of the lesser Clans and thus had many men swearing allegiance to him. He also recruited Irish fighting men, known as "Kerns" and Scots mercenaries, the "Gallowglass", renowned for their expertise with the axe.

**Fourthly**, he was in constant communication with enemy powers in Europe who supported the Catholic cause.

In 1595 Hugh O'Neill underwent the ancient ritual of becoming "The O'Neill" at the inaugural ceremony on the sacred site at Tullaghoge [near Cookstown]

From this time on he openly challenged the Crown's authority and joined the other Clans in the Nine Years War.

### **The Demise of the Brehon Law**

After the Irish defeat at Kinsale in 1602, James the First used this opportunity to finally put an end to the Brehon Law System. His Proclamation of 1603 stated that English law was to be administered throughout the Land of Ireland. To this end the country was to be divided into counties. Constables and Justices of the Peace were appointed in each county to maintain law and order. Courts and gaols were established to enforce their decisions.

**This led to the end of the Celtic Order, in which the Chieftains of the Clans had ruled in scores of small kingdoms throughout the land of Ireland.**

# TOWER HOUSES AND FORTIFIED DWELLINGS

## *An Outline History of Bagenal's Castle:*

The exact date when the Castle was built is unknown, but it is possible to narrow down the time to within a few years. Bagenal was given land in Newry in 1552, but during Queen Mary I's reign (1553 – 1558) he was out of favour as a Protestant. He finally regained his position under Elizabeth, as Marshal of the Army in Ireland, in 1565. He probably began building shortly after this. The extant plans and drawing of the Castle date from about 1568. The Castle was probably finished at about this time or a little later.

After the death of Sir Nicholas, the Castle passed to his son Sir Henry, and so on down the family line in direct descent until 1712. During the seventeenth century Newry was twice attacked, during the Civil War in the 1640s, and in 1689. It is not known what damage the Castle suffered. After 1712, the Castle passed to distant cousins of the Bagenals, and major structural changes were made. The building was converted into two houses, with new windows and doors cut into the walls. A cellar was dug and the old stair tower at the front of the building was demolished. At the beginning of the nineteenth century a warehouse was constructed abutting the Castle wall and making use of part of the latrine tower wall. The rest of this tower may have been demolished at this time. In 1893, the building was purchased for the use of Arthur McCann's bakery business, and it continued to be used as a bakery for a



Courtesy of The Newry & Mourne Museum

century. Again, during this time major changes were made in the building to make it more suitable for its new purpose. The bakery finally closed in 1996. It was after this that archaeologists re-established the outlines of the original Castle, and work was undertaken to convert it into a museum.

## *Recovering the Original Castle:*

What remains today is a partial shell. The extant physical remains may be compared with the Tudor drawings of the 1560s. They show a close correspondence between the ground floor plan and what remains today. This suggests that the floor plans are reasonably accurate throughout, but it is not possible to be certain of all details. The original building's four storeys still remain in large part, though parts of the walls have been either demolished or modified. The floors and room divisions can be traced: the ground, first and second floors were divided into two rooms on each floor. The attic floor, which

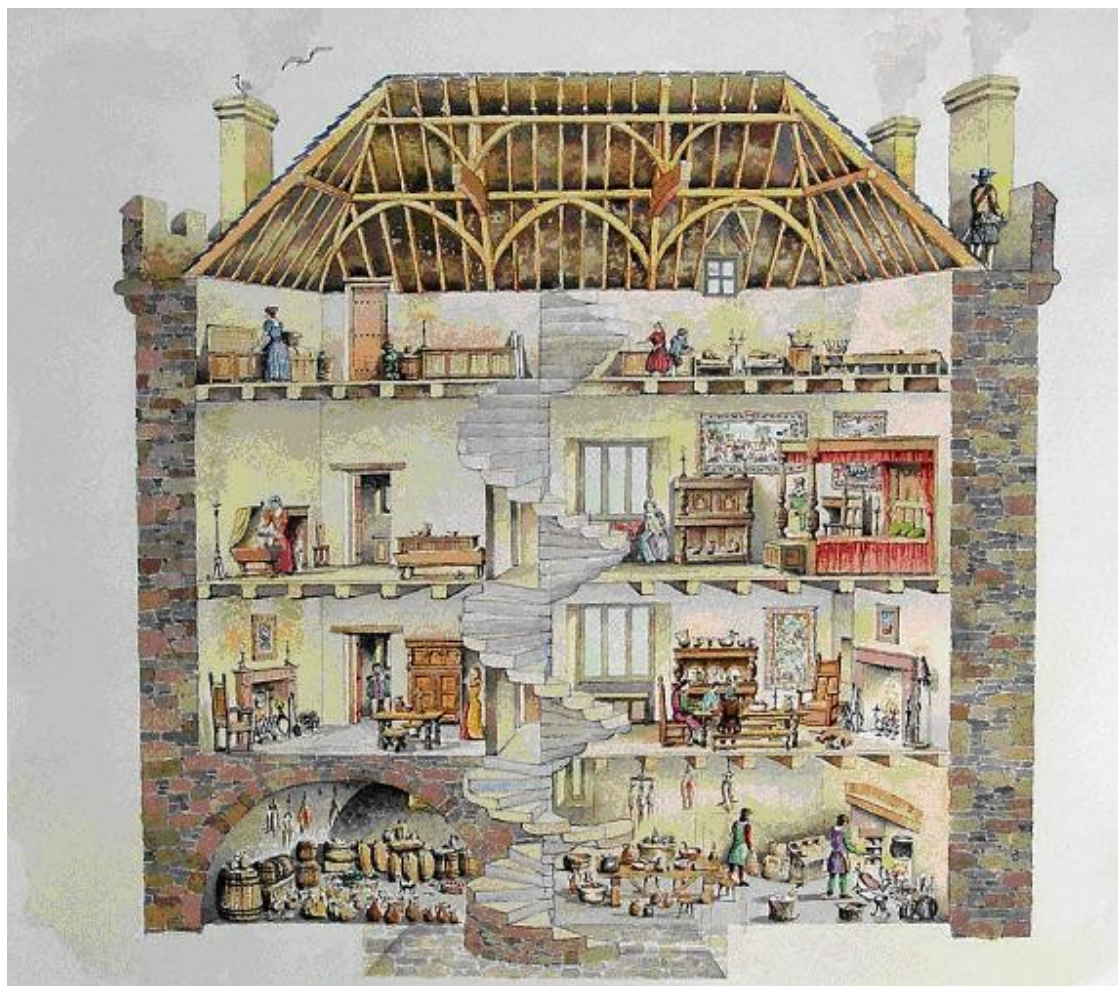


no longer exists apart from the remains of its supports, seems not to have been divided. The plans reveal the site of the two subsidiary towers, one at the front beside the entrance, carrying stairs to the upper floors, and the other at the back north-east corner, containing latrines. It is not possible to be certain about all the windows. The drawings show four chimneys, but probably only two were built. The ground floor storeroom beside the kitchen is depicted as having a vaulted roof, but nothing of such a structure remains. The original roof to the Castle no longer exists. Whether it had gables or was hipped, and whether there was a roof walk and a crenellated parapet is uncertain, but gables and parapet are shown in the early drawing. A machicolation is also shown protecting the door beneath it. Today only a corbel which may have supported this remains. How significant such a feature was for defence – and indeed how heavily defended the Castle itself was – is unclear. The towers are shown with loopholes for muskets, and there are some shown in the walls as well. None now remain. The stair turret apparently had no internal access to the ground floor rooms, which meant that food from the kitchen would have had to be taken out of the adjacent front door and in to the tower to be served upstairs. This appears to have been a defensive weakness (though since kitchens were traditionally detached buildings it may not have seemed significant to people at the time). Nothing remains above ground of any bawn or outbuildings, though these were standard features of the period.

### ***Defining Tower Houses and Fortified Houses:***

Historians have defined two types of building which resemble Bagenal's Castle. The first is the 'tower house' (a term first employed in 1860). Well over a thousand of these tower houses were built throughout Ireland as fortified dwellings for the gentry, from the fifteenth century onward. They were typically square or rectangular in floor-plan, with three to five storeys. One, sometimes more, of the floors was vaulted. A latrine tower might be built at a corner of the main tower, though the most basic tower houses had no built in latrines. Fire places might be built into the walls, but again, in the most basic tower houses there were only braziers. The kitchen was housed outside in the bawn. Windows tended to be small, and other defensive features, such as a crenellated parapet around the roof, and special protection for the door, such as a portcullis, or a yette (a great iron grille), a 'murder hole', and a machicolation or bartizans were common. It is clear that many of these characteristics of the tower house fit Bagenal's Castle and at least one expert has defined it as such.

In the sixteenth century another form of fortified dwelling began to appear. It had roots outside Ireland, in England, Scotland, and Continental Europe. This is called a 'fortified house'. It was built with an eye not only to defence but also to comfort and style. While the ground plan was again square or rectangular, with several storeys, and turrets adjoining the main block, the fortified house paid much more attention to warmth and light. Several fireplaces, with great chimneys, were common; the upper floors were typically enhanced with large windows. Like the tower house, the fortified house



Courtesy of The Newry & Mourne Museum

had its most important rooms on the upper floors; unlike the tower house, the fortified house had its kitchen inside the main building, which would have added to the warmth of the upper floors. High gables were a common feature of the fortified house. Its appearance was intended to suggest not only strength and importance but some style as well. Its features tended to be more regular than the tower house, and more suggestive of a touch of elegance. Defence, of course, was not forgotten and fortified houses exhibited many of the features of tower houses in this respect. Both types of house were built for both the Irish and English and Scottish gentry who migrated to Ireland.

On balance Bagenal's Castle seems to fit best the definition of a fortified house. It was an early example and transitional in character. (There would be far more tastefully designed fortified houses built in

later years.) Bagenal lived in an area which was open to the most unsettled part of Ireland in his time. He needed a home which could withstand a raid, even perhaps a siege, hence the thick walls, protected doors, and lack of large windows near the ground. But he also no doubt wanted to advertise his social position and perhaps his nationality, by some sophistication. He built for comfort – there were probably five fireplaces, and several three light windows and one with four lights. Floors were divided with partitions to create more rooms and thus more privacy. The Castle was, of course, relatively modest in scale: Bagenal was a gentleman, not a great magnate, and there were limits to what he could afford. Nevertheless, built prominently on a hill overlooking the town, the Castle must, in the sixteenth century, have been the most impressive dwelling in Newry and for miles around.

# Sir Nicholas Bagenal

Sir Nicholas Bagenal was born around 1510, the second son of John Bagenal, a tailor who served as mayor of Newcastle-under-Lyme. His mother was Eleanor, daughter of Thomas Whittingham of Middlewich, Cheshire, and cousin of William Whittingham, Dean of Durham. His elder brother was one of Henry VIII's courtiers.



**S**ir Nicholas himself was a gentleman pensioner of Henry VIII, but in order to escape prosecution for killing a man, he was obliged to flee in 1539 to Ireland where he served for a time with the Crown forces. He later moved north and he found employment as military adviser to Conn Bacach, the Great O'Neill, who in 1542 swore allegiance to Henry VIII and was given the title Earl of Tyrone. Conn O'Neill did Bagenal a great service as, at O'Neill's request, the council in Ireland petitioned the king for a pardon on his behalf:

***Whereas at the repaire of the Erle of Tyrone into these parts he made humble and earnest suit unto us to bemean to your Majesty for the pardon of Nicholas Bagnalde, late your highness' servant, who by chance (as the thing is declared to us), was in company of certain lyght persones, wher ther was slayne one of your Majesty's subjects, for the whyche the sayde Nycholas hither fledde and hath sythens doon here very honest and payneful service. And therefore at the humble suete of the sayde Erle, we moste lowely beseche your Majesty to be so good and gracious lorde unto him as to grant him your most gracious pardon.***

In due course Nicholas was pardoned and by the time of Henry VIII's death in 1547 he had risen to become Marshal of the King's Army in Ireland. During Edward VI's reign the monks were forced in 1550 to accept the dissolution of their Cistercian abbey in Newry and to surrender it and its lands to the Crown. The king regarded Bagenal as a trustworthy future tenant and he was given the tenancy for a period of twenty-one years. His rent was set at £30 11s. 8d.



The tenancy was awarded for the following reasons:

***[The abbey is] set in a remote part far from civil order, and from its situation a place suitable for the service of the King to plant a captain with furniture of men for the reduction of those rude and savage quarters to better rule and obedience ... for as much as the said Nicholas went there to reside amongst savages and wild people, and sithen his going thither hath been at great costs and charges, and that in all likelihood through his occasion and honest proceedings the inhabitants of those parts will the sooner incline to civility and obedience to the king, and for that it appeareth by the survey that many of the townlands belonging to the late College be unmanured and under pasture for cattell, that there is no tithe of corn, and by reason of war clerely waste without manurance, or pasturing of cattell, and in those parts the landlords cannot procure tenants without giving great rewards, and commonly all such as become tenants are followers to one or other already, which customly will not depart from them.***

Bagenal succeeded in keeping the estate both for himself and for his descendants after Edward VI issued a patent granting him Newry and the associated lands, in return for certain feudal services. The patent gave him additional income after he was granted the Lordships of Newry, Mourne, (centred on Greencastle) and Carlingford, where he encouraged the growth of trade and the improvement of farming. However his neighbours, Gaelic lords, chiefs and kings, unhappy with his attempts to control them, sent petitions to Edward VI asking for protection against Sir Nicholas's attacks. However the petitions were unsuccessful and the lords were forced to renew their loyalty and again pledge their submission to the Crown in return for promises of peace. About the year 1555 Sir Nicholas married Eleanor, daughter of Sir William Griffiths of Penrhyn. They had five sons and six daughters.

When Mary ascended the throne in 1553 he was stripped of his title as Marshal, but when Elizabeth I ascended the throne in 1558, he had high hopes of regaining the title. However, to his amazement, she did not re-confer the title on him until 1565. Sir Henry's friend Conn Bacach O'Neill died in 1559 after which, unfortunately for Bagenal and contrary to Conn's intentions, Shane, his son and heir, declared himself King of Ulster. On 22 April 1562 Sir Nicholas wrote to the Queen to complain that his lands brought him no income, owing to the raids of Shane O'Neill in Newry. By 1566 Shane had occupied the town and expelled the garrison there but, on his



attempt to extend his territory further south, he was severely defeated north of Dundalk. In the summer of 1566 the Irish withdrew from Newry altogether and Sir Nicholas was able to reoccupy his lands. His intention that year had been to sell them to Sir Thomas Stucley who was employed, at the time, to negotiate peace with O'Neill. However, owing to the Queen's suspicion of Stucley, the deal fell through. In 1575 Sir Nicholas' income from these properties totalled £1,925.

Sir Nicholas held the office of Marshal for twenty-five years and was proud to say that he used his influence to rebuild Newry. About the year 1568 he built a castle on the site of the original Abbot's House attached to the Cistercian Monastery and in 1578 he built St Patrick's Church, the first purpose-built Protestant church in Ireland. His son Sir Henry was appointed as his deputy on 26 August 1583. On the 6 July 1584 Sir Nicholas was appointed chief commissioner for the government of Ulster and in April 1585 was returned to the Irish Parliament as member for County Down. In January 1586 Sir John Perrot complained that Sir Nicholas was too old to perform the duties of Marshal which led to a feud between them. Bagenal agreed to resign his post on 20 October 1590 on condition that the title was conferred on his son Sir Henry.

Sir Nicholas Bagenal died within a year of resigning his post as Marshal. He was buried in St Patrick's Church in Newry.

## Sir Henry Bagenal <sup>16</sup> ( 1556 - 98 )



THE BAGENAL ARMS.

Sir Henry Bagenal was Marshal of the English army in Ireland under Queen Elizabeth and Chief Commissioner of Ulster.

*He is remembered today for -*

**Being defeated in the strategically important Battle of the Yellow Ford ( 1598 ). This was the worst defeat of English forces in Ireland. Sir Henry lost to his arch enemy, Hugh O'Neill who led the Irish in that struggle.**

**Failing to prevent his youngest sister, the beautiful Mabel, from eloping with Hugh O'Neill, or having her marriage declared invalid.**

Sir Henry was the eldest son of Sir Nicholas Bagenal from England and a Welsh noblewoman Eleanor Griffiths. He had two brothers and six sisters. Mabel, the youngest, was later to embarrass him by marrying his Irish enemy Hugh O'Neill, the 2nd Earl of Tyrone.

As a young man Henry left Oxford University to join his father, Sir Nicholas, who was Marshal of the English forces in Ireland. In 1577 when his father was appointed Chief Commissioner of Ulster, Henry became his assistant and was knighted in 1578 at Athlone.

In 1577 he married Eleanor Savage a noblewoman from Cheshire and had four

sons and six daughters ( with her and by later marriages ).

His early career as a military commander was a failure. He led the rear guard of a force which was defeated by the Irish at Glenmalur, Co.Wicklow in 1580. In 1584, as commander at Carrickfergus, he led an army which had to retreat after an ambush at Glenarm prevented him from expelling an invading army of 1300 Scots from Rathlin Island.

In 1586 he became a Member of Parliament for Anglesey, North Wales through family connections. He also submitted a report to the English government entitled **Description and Present State of Ulster** which recommended curtailing the power of Hugh O'Neill, 2nd Earl of Tyrone. This report was not adopted.

In 1587 Sir Henry returned to Ireland as his father's deputy and succeeded him as Marshal of the army in 1590. He also became a member of Dublin Privy Council, the centre of administration in Ireland.

Succeeding his father in 1591 as Chief Commissioner of Ulster, he was undermined by English government

policy to ally with the O'Neills. Sir Henry regarded Hugh O'Neill as a traitor and his greatest enemy.



Aodh Mór Uí Néill (anglisé comme)  
Hugh The Great O'Neill) (c. 1550 – 20 July 1616)

When Hugh's second wife died in 1591 ( he was 41 ) he eloped with and married Mabel, aged 20, Sir Henry's youngest sister . Sir Henry had tried to obstruct the relationship and bitterly objected to the marriage which he unsuccessfully tried to have declared invalid . He also withheld Mabel's dowry. He was horrified to be linked by marriage to a family which he regarded as traitors to the Crown. Mabel quickly became disillusioned with her husband and his way of life. She had no children and died at her husband's home in 1596 in unknown circumstances.

Hugh O'Neill had expected to have full control of his lands in Newry provided he pledged loyalty to the Queen and even fought on her side at times. Eventually he realised that the English would not tolerate any independently ruled areas in Ireland. Consequently in 1595 he renounced his English title of 2nd Earl of Tyrone and became O'Neill Mor ( the Great O'Neill ) his title as a Gaelic prince. The Nine Years War followed with O'Neill uniting the Gaelic and Hiberno-Norman lords against their English rulers. He was

portrayed as a champion of Roman Catholicism which was a helpful image to exploit when he later negotiated with the French and the Spanish to send him military aid.

The campaigns which followed focused on Marshal Bagenal's attempts to relieve and supply English garrisons in Ulster under siege from the Irish.

Irish forces may have lacked conventional military training and artillery to match the English but they had devastating success in ambushing, chasing and laying traps for their foes by using their knowledge of the countryside and fighting like guerrillas.

In 1598 Bagenal led some 4000 men to relieve the Blackwater fort near Armagh but was badly defeated and shot dead at the Battle of the Yellow Ford.



Courtesy of John McCloskey, Nerve Centre, Derry / Londonderry

This was the worst defeat of English forces by the Irish but Hugh O'Neill failed to follow up this victory by taking Dublin, because, it is thought, he had little artillery and no means to provide for an army in the field.

After the end of the Nine Years War and defeat at the Battle of Kinsale (1601) O'Neill's position became vulnerable, despite a Royal Pardon in 1603. As part of the Flight of the Earls he fled to the continent in 1607 and died in Rome in 1616.



## The GREAT hugh o'neill

In 1542 Hugh O'Neill's grandfather, Conn was one of the first Irish chieftains to take up the offer of "Surrender and Regrant" from the government of the day. This was a system whereby all his lands were given to the English crown [at that time Henry the Eighth] and then returned to him by titles valid in English law. These lands included a large part of Tyrone and most of Armagh.



Hugh was born in 1550 during the reign of Edward the Sixth. When he was nine years old he was taken to England by Sir Henry Sydney [later Lord Deputy of Ireland] and brought up in the new Protestant religion. This policy of "fostering" was an attempt to ensure the allegiance of the Gaelic chieftains to the English King.

He returned to Ireland when he was 18 years old as Baron of Dungannon. At this time he was loyal to the English and was rewarded by his promotion to the Earldom i.e. the Earl of Tyrone.

His neighbour the Earl of Tyrconnel

[Donegal] Red Hugh O'Donnell, ruled not only Donegal but as far down as Sligo. Between them the two lords controlled a large part of the north and west of Ireland. The alliance between them was cemented when O'Neill married Siobhan, O'Donnell's sister after his divorce from his first wife. They had two sons, Hugh and Henry.

His third marriage was also a marriage of political convenience. When Siobhan O'Donnell died he asked Marshall Henry Bagenal for his sister's hand in marriage. Sir Henry was Commander of the Queen's Army in Ireland and strongly disapproved of Hugh O'Neill. Having been denied Sir Henry's blessing he persuaded Mabel to elope with him and they were married in a Protestant ceremony in 1591. He had no difficulty in switching allegiances if it were to his advantage.

Four years later Mabel Bagenal died, greatly disillusioned by her life with O'Neill due mainly to his practice of maintaining several mistresses. He was still compliant to the Queen at this time, even assisting Bagenal in military actions against other rebellious Irish chieftains.

Little by little he broke free from his alliance with the English asserting his independence. In 1595 he was finally



proclaimed THE O'Neill, chieftain of the O'Neill clan and was inaugurated at Tullaghogue, near Cookstown. [see note2 below]

In June 1599 he attacked and defeated a large force under Bagenal at Monaghan. After this victory he was proclaimed a traitor by the English and this action precipitated the Nine Years War.

### ***The Nine Years' War***

Queen Elizabeth responded by deploying increased numbers of troops in the country. The Irish strategy of "hit and run" was much despised by the English army. However these "guerrilla" tactics made good use of their knowledge of the countryside and were most effective against the conventional "marching formation" methods employed by the enemy. Over time Hugh O'Neill's reputation as a formidable leader grew and his increasingly sophisticated methods of making war were much feared by the English. His many successes over the intervening years culminated in his spectacular victory at the "Battle of the Yellow Ford" in 1598 when his constructions of trenches, barricades and fortifications won the day. [The tactics used at Yellow Ford are still taught at Sandhurst as a model of good practice] Sir Hugh Bagenal was killed during this action.

Queen Elizabeth was outraged at this defeat of her army and determined to make a concerted effort to annihilate the Irish forces. She sent the Earl of Essex, her favourite, as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with 16000 men under his command, to "deal with the problem". Essex was the son of the first Earl of Essex who had befriended O'Neill when he was a youth in England.

After a disastrous campaign in the South where he lost two thirds of his

soldiers the Earl of Essex finally 19 confronted O'Neill and his army near Crossmaglen. O'Neill persuaded him to "parley". They agreed to cease hostilities. Essex abandoned his campaign and returned to England without royal permission. Elizabeth was furious. Essex was tried for treason and beheaded two years later.

As far back as 1595 O'Neill and O'Donnell had sought help from Phillip the Second of Spain, promoting themselves as champions of the Catholic cause and promising him the crown of Ireland if they succeeded in vanquishing the English. But it was not until 1601 that his promise to organise a new invasion of Ireland suddenly became a reality.

In 1601 a Spanish force about 4000 strong landed at Kinsale. Unfortunately the two Irish Earls had expected the Spaniards to land at Donegal or even Sligo but now they had no option but to march south - the whole length of Ireland. When they arrived at Kinsale the English under Mountjoy attacked the Irish forces and, after only about half an hour, the Irish were routed. The Spanish took no part at all in the battle since the Irish failed to reach the pre-appointed meeting place! O'Neill made his way home again with his defeated troops, hotly pursued by the English forces.

Despite the victory at Kinsale the English were frustrated in their search for a quick end to the war. Both Lord Mountjoy and Sir Arthur Chichester adopted a "scorched earth" policy resulting in great hardship, poverty, famine and even death for a large number of the indigenous population. Nevertheless Tyrone continued to hold out.

### ***The Treaty of Mellifont***

In 1603 the war ended when both

O'Neill and O'Donnell were pardoned by the English Crown. The two Earls were under the mistaken impression that Queen Elizabeth was negotiating terms with them but actually she had already died, a fact that was kept from them by her ministers, since it was thought that James the First would not exact such good terms for the English. Under the "Treaty of Mellifont" much of their land was confiscated by the Crown. Over the next four years the English administration whittled away at the power of the Earls.

In August 1607 Hugh O' Neill received a summons from Sir Arthur Chichester [now the Lord Deputy of Ireland] to meet him at Slane, near Dublin. When he arrived he was told to present himself to King James in London by late September.

After this encounter he wrote to the King of Spain in these words:-

***"The King of England summoned us to London with the intention of either beheading us or putting us in the Tower of London for life"***

Shortly afterwards a message arrived from the Earl of Tyrconnel [Donegal] to inform him that a ship had berthed in Lough Swilly and that all was in readiness to carry them, their families and followers to the safety of Spain.

Fearing for his life, Tyrone made the decision to leave Ireland in order to raise a new army in Spain and return as soon as possible to free his native land. Little did he know that he would never see Ireland again.

To sum up, what can we say about Hugh O'Neil at this time in his life?

He was a brilliant statesman, a wily politician, a gifted soldier and much admired throughout Europe as an outstanding commander.

He also was a ruthless warlord who could destroy anyone in his path if it suited his purpose, even other Gaelic

Chieftains.

20

And yet he could be loyal to his family and followers and was a Champion of the Catholic Cause.

*"He certainly was no clodhopper from Dungannon!!"*

## ***Additional information***

### **The Two Opposing Armies**

It is interesting to note the differences between the English and Irish armies in Tudor times, as described by a contemporary writer, O'Sullivan Beare .

### **The Queen's troops**

***"Foot and horse were sheathed in mail; the musketeers were equipped with heavy and light guns, swords, daggers and helmets. The whole army gleamed with crested plumes and silver sashes. Brass cannon mounted on wheels were drawn by horses and they carried a large supply of gunpowder and ball of lead and iron"***

### **The Gaelic Forces**

***"On the other side the armies of O'Neill and O'Donnell were very inferior in equipment all being light armed – but they were excellent marksmen and expert sharpshooters"***

## **2. Becoming "THE O'Neill"**

Hugh O'Neill became the chieftain of his clan when he was inaugurated in Tullaghogue near Cookstown in 1595.

In this ancient ceremony the Gold Sandal was thrown over his shoulder and then placed on his foot. The White Staff was put in his hand and the Bell of Saint Patrick was rung at the moment of installation.

This ritual was thought of as the wedding of the Chief to his Kingdom.

## THE FLIGHT OF THE EARLS 4<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 1607

It was thanks to Connaught Maguire, Hugh O'Neill's son-in-law that a boat was moored in Lough Swilly ready to take the Earls, their families and followers to the continent when the decision was made to leave Ireland and seek help from Spain.

He had travelled to France and acquired an 80 ton ship and some 60 men as crew/soldiers to sail it back to Ireland under the pretext of being a cargo ship loaded with fishing nets and wine, normal commercial goods at that time.

The necessary arrangements for the Flight were taken in the greatest of haste. The Earl of Tyrone set off from Slane, heading for Lough Swilly, stopping to pick up his eldest son by Catherine Maginnis, John, at Mellifont where he was being fostered by Sir Garrett Moore [a tradition in Irish Gaelic Society]

He then travelled to Dungannon where he searched in vain for his six year old middle son, Conn, also fostered at that time by a family who were travelling the countryside in the traditional practice of "creaghting" [to find fresh grazing pasture for their animals]. After two days frantic searching the Earl set out in the dead of night with all speed for Rathmullan, a decision that resulted in Conn spending the rest of his life in captivity.

At Stewartstown, one of his dwellings, he collected his wife, Catherine, their daughter Brid and their youngest son, three year old Brian, and other members of the household.

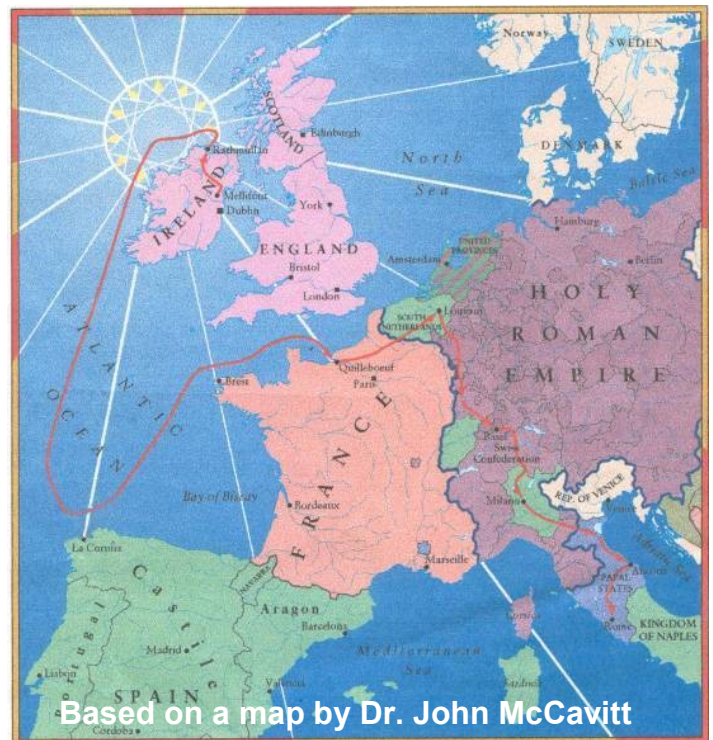
They reached Rathmullan where they were met by Rory McDonnell, the Earl of

Tyrconnel; Connaught Maguire, the Earl of Fermanagh, and many of their followers.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> September 1607 ninety – nine passengers in all boarded the ship and set sail for La Corunna in Spain.

### The Journey.

Fearing an encounter with the English fleet they pushed out to sea but three days into their journey they encountered a violent storm which lasted for thirteen days. Believing that they had been



blown off course they changed direction and made for the coast of France [Later it was discovered that they were within 30 miles of their destination when they turned back.]

They made landfall at Quilleboeuf, at the mouth of the River Seine in France, having been at sea for 21 days. Although, at first, local French officials

gave them a frosty reception, soon news came from Henry the Fourth of France to treat the party with all due respect. Afterwards he said:-

*"I could not have done any injury to noblemen who were obliged to leave their paternal inheritance because of their faith"*

In any case the French King was an admirer of the Earl of Tyrone, judging him to be the third greatest commander of his age, regarding himself, of course, as the first and the Spaniard, the Count of Fuentes, second.

The Spanish authorities, having been told of their plight advised them that they should proceed to Spanish Flanders [now Belgium] and over-winter there.

The Archduke of Spanish Flanders greeted them most royally with gun salutes, banquets and entertainments. There they met up with O'Neill's second son by Siobhan O'Donnel. Hugh was now Colonel of the Irish regiment in Brussels. He had been educated in Spain and was only twenty years old when he received this commission.

Meanwhile in Spain, the government was anxious to avoid causing offence to England in the wake of the Anglo-Spanish peace treaty of 1604, after the war in the Netherlands. So they were determined that Tyrone should not come to Spain but rather that he should be side tracked to Rome.

The émigrés were completely unaware of this plan, so when they were urgently advised to make their way to Milan [a Spanish state in Italy] they agreed, thinking that they could sail from Genoa, a nearby port, to their ultimate destination, Spain.

The Journey through Germany and Switzerland was a daunting prospect. But they had no option. It was decided to leave the children in Louvain with their nurses, tutors and servants. [The children included Hugh O'Neill's two

young sons, John and Brian; Rory 22 O'Donnel's infant son, Hugh, and his brother Caffar O'Donnel's son, also called Hugh.] Some of the other fellow passengers also remained and joined the Irish Regiment there.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> February 1908 the Irish party left Louvaine. The thirty-two men were on horseback and the ladies, Catherine Maginnis and her lovely young daughter, Brid; Rose O'Donnel, Caffar's wife and her sister, Nuala travelled in a coach.

They passed through present-day Luxemburg into the Duchy of Lorraine where they were met with generous hospitality by Duke Charles the Third.

In Germany the welcome they received was determined by whether or not the town was Catholic or Protestant. [Hostile territory]

The Swiss city of Basle was on their route but since it was inhabited by heretics [i.e. Protestants] they did not linger long there.

The terrain was increasingly rough and mountainous so the ladies were now on horseback. On St. Patrick's Day 1608 the émigrés were carefully traversing a snow-bound Alpine pass, known locally as the "Devil's Bridge" when a pack horse carrying most of their money plunged headlong into a raging river and was nearly swept away. The horse was rescued but unfortunately the money was not --- a devastating blow which left them greatly impoverished.

They eventually reached Milan [a Spanish governed state in Italy] on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March. The Count de Fuentes was the Governor [remember he was marked out as the second greatest soldier of his age by the King of France] He welcomed them with great hospitality, wining and dining them for three whole weeks.

The émigrés expected to embark for Spain at Genoa but this was not the



intention of their hosts who had been ordered to detain them as long as possible before presenting them with the Spanish King's decision that they should progress to Rome, where the Pope had agreed to receive them as champions of the Catholic cause in Ireland.

Although bitterly disappointed with this ultimatum they had no alternative but to travel onwards to Rome. On the second day of their journey to Rome they passed through the town of Bobbia where Saint Columbanus had founded his last monastery one thousand years before.

When they arrived at the outskirts of Rome they were met by fifteen horse-drawn carriages as an escort to enter the city and accompany them to the "palace" provided for them.

His Holiness, Pope Paul the Fifth, received them on the 4th May 1608. A hectic round of religious and social events followed. The Earls' party were given pride of place at the Easter religious ceremonies, even permitted to carry the Pope's canopy at the feast of Corpus Christi, a privilege never before afforded to any one nation. Tyrone made the most of what he considered his temporary stay in Rome.

## **Exile in Rome**

Unfortunately a succession of personal tragedies soon overcame the group. Young Rory O'Donnel, the Earl of Tyrconnel, died from a bout of malaria, as did his brother Caffer. Hugh O'Neill's son and heir Hugh, the Baron of Duncannon, was taken ill and died as did Connaught Maguire who had been a tower of strength to the group [remember it was he who had brought the ship from France to Ireland for the Flight]

These deaths had a major psychological

impact on the remaining Irish 23 contingent in Rome and did not bode well for the future.

**Nevertheless over the following years Tyrone made many attempts to secure support and funding to raise an army and return to Ireland to reclaim his lands all to no avail.**

Rumours of the Earl of Tyrone's imminent return continued to be a threat to the English Crown and constantly dampened the enthusiasm of potential colonists to take up the offer of land in Ulster. King James made several attempts to offer him a "deal" for his peaceful return to Ireland, even offering that he reinstate his former lands.

Even after the Earl of Tyrone died in 1616 the English continued to dread the fact that one day one of his descendants would return to Ireland to lead a new revolt.

***James the First used "The Flight of the Earls " as the excuse to dispossess the native Irish of their lands and to set in motion the Plantation of Ulster by colonists of Scottish Presbyterian and English Protestant origin which initiated the bitter sectarian divide in Ulster which remains to this day.***

**If the Earls hadn't turned back on that fateful day when their ship was just thirty miles from the Spanish coast the subsequent course of Irish history could have been very different.**

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| <b>6</b> | <b><i>Sir Henry Bagenal:</i></b>                    | <b>Adrianne Brown</b>                  |
| <b>7</b> | <b><i>The Great Hugh O'Neill :</i></b>              | <b>Grace Burnside</b>                  |
| <b>8</b> | <b><i>The Flight of the Earls:</i></b>              | <b>Grace Burnside</b>                  |

**General Research and advice:** **Ronnie McClements**

**Play:** **HUGH AND MABEL**

*Playwright:* **Charlie Combe**

*Music:* **compiled by Ruth Houston**

*Producer:* **Joyce Gibson**

*Original cast:* **Lorna Douglas, Ken Ogilvie, Peter Croft, Jaqui Edwards, Therese Nagel, Geoff Reeves and Charlie Combe**

*Sound effects:* **Ronnie McClements, Adrianne Brown**

**NEWRY U3A**

*Trail Organised by :* **Peter O'Hanlon**

*Brochure prepared by:* **Mary Dynan**

*With extensive consultations with:* **Pat Cunningham, Benny McKay, Chris Roberts**

***We should also like to acknowledge the kind help and advice of the staff of Newry and Mourne Museum, especially Noreen Cunningham: Curator, Ken Abraham: Deputy Curator and Declan Carroll: Education Officer***



## Associated Activity Cards

# IRISH LIFE & CUSTOMS (1)

## RELIGION AND POLITICS

Can you imagine what life was like in Ireland at the time of the **Bagenals**? Unless you were a member of one of the English settler families, like the **Bagenals**, your life would have been very different from today.

Two hundred years earlier, **King Henry VI** had set up an English speaking area round Dublin known as the 'Pale'. It covered a long narrow area in the East which not only included Co. Dublin but Counties Louth, Meath and Kildare as well. People there dressed, spoke and ate very much as their counter-parts in England, but elsewhere in Ireland, especially in the West, people were regarded as 'savages', from a French word *sauvage* meaning wild or uncultivated.

However on the continent the Irish wolfhound was seen by nobles and kings as a symbol of strength and courage. In the days when wolves existed in Ireland the dogs were used for hunting and early Celtic stories told of Irish wolfhounds accompanying their owners into battle. In Tudor times many were exported to the continent where they were much admired.



## THE IRISH WAY OF LIFE IN JEOPARDY

Almost all people living in Ireland belonged to the Roman Catholic church and the policies of **King Henry VIII** had had a big impact on them. His ambition was to establish the Protestant Church across all of his kingdom, including Ireland and so he had systematically destroyed the monasteries, convents and priories. The priests, monks and nuns had provided education and health care to the ordinary people who were, as a result, very much affected by the dissolution.

Other difficulties were caused by the differences in manner of government. The Irish did not see the king (or queen) as their ruler but looked up to their local chieftains, such as **Hugh O'Neill**, Earl of Tyrone, for guidance. Nearly all chieftains, although ruling their clans independently, tried to follow the Brehon Law. The Irish were very proud of this system and gatherings accompanied by games and competitions were frequently held throughout Ireland to discuss matters of common concern. These meetings helped to give the people a feeling of belonging. First **Henry VIII** and then **Elizabeth** tried to undermine these ties and anglicize or as they saw it 'civilize' Ireland. One clever way, invented by **Henry**, was to cause disagreement between chieftain and tenants over land ownership. The peasants started to mistrust their own leaders. Another way was to bring in yet more English settlers, like the **Bagenals**, to dilute the culture.

# ACTIVITIES

- 1 . When the 'Pale' was set up, and a fence and fortifications were erected. It ran from Dundalk in the North, inland to Naas and South to Bray on the coast, 8 miles from Dublin. Find these places on the map. Why was the area called the **Pale**? (clue in text)
- 2 . We still use the expression '**Beyond the Pale**' today. What do you think it means? How do you think the expression entered the English language?
- 3 . Why did the Spanish Captain **Francisco de Cuellar** (see Card II) and other travellers call the Irish 'Savages'? Were they really savage in our sense of the word? Did they use the word in the same way as we do nowadays?
- 4 . Write a few sentences about **Brehon law** . Use 'Law & Order' card to help you.
- 5 . Why were the native Irish so much worse off regarding health and social welfare after the reign of Henry VIII?
- 6 . Find these words in the text. What do they mean?

***Dissolution, anglicize, tenants, counterparts, systematically, jeopardy, the continent, the Pale***

**Choose your answer from the following list:-**

- A. behave as the English do
- B. bit by bit
- C. part of a type of wooden fencing or paling
- D. the same sort of people elsewhere
- E. threat of danger
- F. the mainland of Europe
- G. getting rid of
- H. people who rent the land but do not own it



This is a picture of taken in Carlingford, near Newry. It shows the Dominican Friary built in Mediaeval times in 1305 but as you can see some very important parts are missing. What are they? Why? What important services do you think the monks provided for the people of Carlingford and also for sailors sheltering in the

# IRISH LIFE & CUSTOMS (2)

## HOUSES AND HOMES: FOOD AND DRINK

The Irish were very proud of their homes. A Gaelic law decreed that the area around man's house belonged to him for as far as he could throw a spear. There were very few windows and glass was expensive so, when English settlers moved house, they took the glass from their windows with them!

We learn a lot about the way of life in the remoter parts of Ireland from the writings of **Captain Francisco de Cuellar**. His Armada ship was wrecked in Sligo Bay whilst escaping from the English in 1588 when he became one of the very few Spaniards to escape with his life. He finally arrived in Scotland, having taken a year to cross Ireland where he observed that the 'savages' walked a lot, were good-looking, kind and strong.

They worked hard, '*live in thatched huts and only eat once a day, usually butter with oaten-bread. They drink only sour milk, no water and on feast days eat some half-cooked flesh without bread or salt*' which was accompanied by ale and whiskey, both made from barley and drunk in very large quantities. Wine was imported by the Gaelic lords in return for hides or sometimes, from the Spanish, in return for the right to fish.

Other travellers tell us that the Irish were particularly fond of fatty pork. Cattle though were at the heart of farming, giving them whey, beef-broth and clotted milk or bonnyclabber. Milk was too precious to drink alone but they often mixed blood taken from the ears of cows and horses with butter to form a jelly. They also ate shamrocks (wood sorrel) roots and other herbs but, according to some observers, they did not have many table manners!

## STYLE

Although **De Cuellar** thought that the Irish women were particularly beautiful, he did not admire their style – '*They clothe themselves, according to their habit, with tight trousers and loose coats of very coarse goat's hair (sheep's wool) They cover themselves with blankets, and wear their hair down to their eyes.*'

Everyone wore the 'Blanket' or rectangular mantle. These were surprisingly waterproof, as a tufted nap raised with a teazle seed-head and worn on the inside, kept the wearer warm and dry. The tufts were treated with honey mixed with vinegar to keep them curly. Mantles even served as temporary dwelling places for outlaws on the run as they do today in some parts of the world e.g in Turkey, where shepherds use similar capes to keep them warm and dry looking after sheep on the hillsides. Better-off people often tried to keep up with the fashions. Irish men were known for their very wide and full sleeves and some even washed their shirts four or five times a year! They were also very proud of their '*long, crisp glibs*,' a thick roll of hair on the forehead. English settlers were forbidden to wear them. A beautifully tailored lady's gown was found in a bog in Co.Tipperary. It had a very low cut neckline but was really quite modest as Irish ladies thought nothing of exposing their full breasts in polite society!





# ACTIVITIES

1. Why do you think that the Irish people ate oats rather than wheat or other grains?
2. Look at the picture of the seed-head of a teasle plant. Why did the Irish use this particular plant in making their mantles? Look carefully at the end of the spikes.
3. Why is some of the information above written in *italics*? Who wrote it? Try putting the passage in italics about clothes into modern English
4. From the description of their clothes and appearance try to draw an Irish man and an Irish woman.
5. The following is a description of a 16th century elegant dress found in a bog in County Tyrone, now in the Ulster Museum. See if you can draw it.

**Neckline:** U-shaped and very low with a small stand-up collar at the back of the neck.

**Bodice:** Opening down front to a low waist which is pointed over the stomach.

**Skirt:** Very heavy, very full, ankle length. Made of 23 triangular pieces of cloth sewn together.  
Measurement at the bottom 22 feet 6 inches

Go to the Ulster museum in Belfast and have a look at it.

6. Find these words or phrases in the text. What do they mean?

***Whey, the right to, bonnyclabber, mantle, decreed, keep warm and dry***

**Choose your answer from the following list:-**

- A. clotted milk
- B. watery liquid separated from the curd when making cheese
- C. cloak
- D. insulate
- E. permission to
- f. ruled



This is a picture of **Taaffe's Castle** in Carlingford near Newry. It was used as a dwelling place but also as a warehouse. In Tudor times the sea came right up to the door. The Irish farmers in the district bred cattle and also sheep and were quite fond of 'a wee drink.'

# LAW AND ORDER IN IRELAND IN TUDOR TIMES

A study of the law and customs of people gives us a picture of how they lived and what they thought at that time.

**The Brehon Law** Before English rule Ireland had its own system of law dating from Celtic times. Each Lord or Chief was responsible for keeping the law in his own territory with the help of the **Brehon**, a learned man who knew the Ancient Laws. **English Common Law** The law is based on “**precedents**”. That is, it is based on legal decisions in previous cases which serve as a rule in future similar cases.

**Property** According to **Brehon law**, the land belonged **not** to the Chief but to the Clan as a whole. In **English law** a person must prove that the land was lawfully his. Irish law relied on verbal contracts not written ones.

**Inheritance** Before he died the Chieftain of the clan would decide who would make the most worthy leader after he died. There was no **obvious** inheritor and on the death of the Lord this often led to in-fighting by the relatives. In **Brehon law** the property was divided among **all the males**, even illegitimate children received a portion. In **English law** the **first born male** inherited all the family's property called **primogeniture**.

**Marriage** With their parents' permission boys were legally allowed to marry at 14 years and girls at 12 years under **English law**. There was no written rule in **Irish law**. In **English law** the wife became the property of her husband once she was married, as did any property she owned. Under **Brehon law** women had equal property rights before and after marriage. In **English law** divorce was extremely difficult but in **Irish law** either of the marital partners could divorce the other and still retain the property they had when they were married.

**Religion** Irish Catholics were constantly demanding the right to practice their own religion. **English law** did not allow religious or civil liberties. The Government tried to force the Irish to convert to the Protestant Faith and to adopt the English Common law and customs.

**The End of Brehon Law** After the Irish defeat by English Crown forces at Kinsale in 1602, James the First finally put an end to the **Brehon Law** System. His **Proclamation of 1603** stated that **English law** was to be administered throughout Ireland. Constables and Justices of the Peace were appointed to maintain law and order. Courts and gaols were established to enforce their decisions.

# ACTIVITIES



*An Irish Chieftain at Dinner  
The Image of Irelande  
John Derrick 1581*

1. **Find the one word which means the following :**  
 the law system used in Ireland in Celtic times \_\_\_\_\_  
 the legal decisions in previous cases which is the basis for English law \_\_\_\_\_  
 the first born male inherits all the family property \_\_\_\_\_  
 an official announcement declaring limits to the law \_\_\_\_\_
2. **In Tudor times, who inherited the land when the owner died?**  
 in Brehon law \_\_\_\_\_  
 in English Common Law \_\_\_\_\_  
 Which of these laws do you think is the better system? Why?
3. Discuss the different laws affecting marriage in Tudor times with regard to young people and women. How do these differ from the law today?
4. How important do you think religious liberty was to people in those times?



# TOWER HOUSES AND FORTIFIED DWELLINGS

## **Sir Nicholas Bagenal's Problem:**

When Bagenal became Marshall of the Army under Queen Elizabeth, he had been in Ireland for over twenty years and seems to have been determined to stay permanently. A gentleman needed a house suitable for his social position. He was not a very wealthy man, so he could not build a great castle or mansion. But the house had to be big: for one thing he had nine children, and no doubt a number of servants. He wanted to live as comfortably as possible, with warm rooms and plenty of light. He also wanted to be safe from attack: Newry was on the border of Ulster, which was very troubled at this time. Perhaps as much as anything he wanted a dwelling which would mark his position as an important man – a representative of Queen Elizabeth's government. When he built his "castle" in the late 1560s it was the largest house in Newry, standing very prominently on a hill overlooking the town.

## **The Original Bagenal's Castle:**

Only a part of the original building is left today. It was rectangular, with four floors, and two towers attached to it, one at the front with stairs to the upper floors, and another at the corner at the back, containing latrines. It probably had two chimneys, with a total of five fireplaces, and several large windows on the second and third floors. There was a kitchen and storeroom on the ground floor. Living and sleeping rooms took up the second and third floors, while the fourth floor was an attic which provided more sleeping space and storage room.

## **What Sort of Building was Bagenal's Castle?**

The building looks very much like a "Tower House", but is something more. It is called today a "Fortified House". The two were similar in usually being square or rectangular, with three or four storeys. They often had one or more towers at the side or corner. They all had several features which made them easier to defend against attack. The easiest difference between them is the location of the kitchen. The tower house kitchen was outside the main building; in the fortified house it was inside. Fortified houses also aimed to be more comfortable to live in. One important feature was more fireplaces for warmth. Another was larger windows to provide more light. Both tower houses and fortified houses were built by Irish and English gentry.

The Castle's Defences:

In the 1560s Newry was defended by an earth bank and a moat. These may have made it less necessary to take so much care with defence of the house itself. Nevertheless it had very solid walls – about 1.5 metres thick. There were probably only very narrow windows on the ground floor. There seem to have been loopholes in the towers and possibly some on the upper floors. There may have been a portcullis in the stair-tower doorway. A machicolation probably projected above the doors. The roof may have had a crenellated parapet. Finally a bawn almost undoubtedly surrounded the house.



# ACTIVITIES

1. What sorts of things do you think Nicholas Bagenal had in mind when he built the Castle?
2. Imagine that you lived at the time when the Castle was built. You have not seen it yourself but have had it described to you. If you wanted to pass on a description of the Castle to an Irish chieftain, how would you describe it? Could you include a plan or sketch?
3. The kitchen in the Castle was inside, on the ground floor. What advantage might this arrangement be over a kitchen outside, in a building in the bawn?
4. How would you describe a tower house?

Look up the following terms and write a definition for each. (Illustrate your answer if you can.)

- a. **bawn**;
- b. **crenellation**;
- c. **parapet**;
- d. **portcullis**.

6. Imagine you lived in the sixteenth century and had to build a fortified house. Design the house you might build. You can include any features - like towers, crenellations machicolation, bartizans - and don't forget chimneys and gables. You might draw the house or write a description or both. A plan might be helpful. Don't forget to say where things are if you do not draw anything - e.g. 'the tower is at the front left corner'.



# SIR NICHOLAS BAGENAL

**Sir Nicholas Bagenal** was born around 1510. In order to escape prosecution for killing a man, he was obliged to flee in 1539 from England, his native land, to Ireland where he served for a time with the Crown forces. He later moved north and found employment as a mercenary soldier and then as a military adviser to **Conn Bacach**, the Great O'Neill, who in 1542 swore allegiance to **Henry VIII** and was given the title Earl of Tyrone. The newly appointed Earl of Tyrone did **Sir Nicolas** a great service as, at his request, the council in Ireland petitioned the king for a pardon for him.

In due course he was pardoned and by the time of **Henry VIII's** death in 1547 he had risen to become Marshal of the King's Army in Ireland. In 1550 **Edward VI** appointed him to the Irish Privy Council. After 1550, when the monks were forced to accept the dissolution of their Cistercian abbey in Newry, **Sir Nicholas** was given the tenancy of the abbey and its lands for a period of twenty-one years. His rent was set at £30 11s. 8d.. The king permitted him at a later date to keep the estate and its lands for the duration of his life and that of his descendants on the understanding that he would carry out services for him when needed.

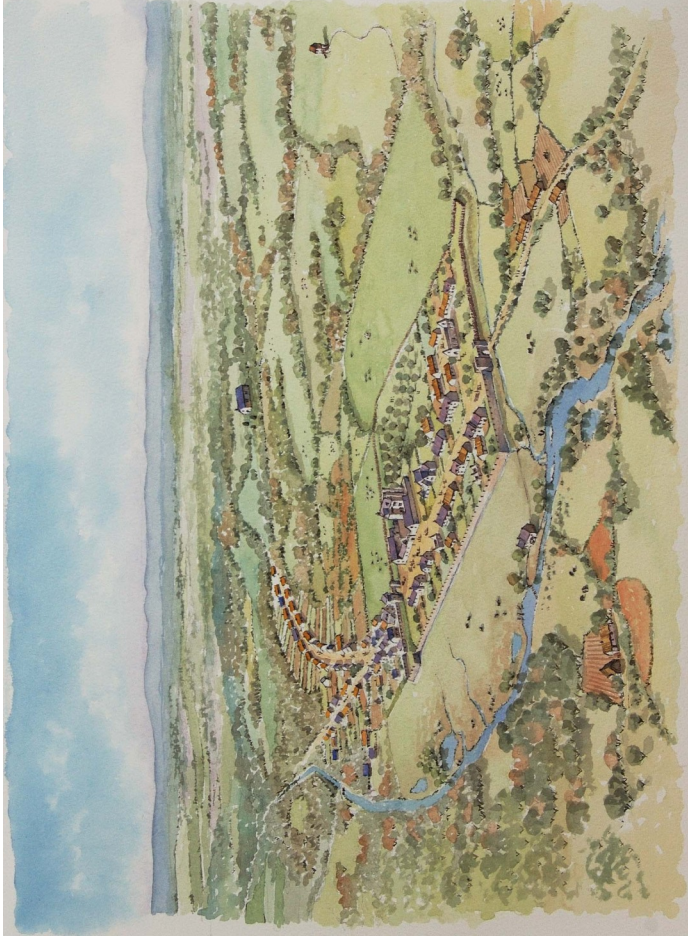
He was also granted the lordships and castles of Mourne and Greencastle; and lands in Carlingford. He made a great effort to encourage the growth of trade and the improvement of farming. However, these endeavours were not appreciated by his neighbouring lords, the Gaelic chiefs and kings, and they sent petitions to **Edward VI** to protest about his behaviour. Their complaints were ignored. When **Mary** ascended the throne in 1553, **Sir Nicholas** was stripped of his title as Marshal. About the year 1555 he married **Eleanor**, daughter of **Sir William Griffiths** of Penrhyn; and they had five sons and six daughters. He had high hopes when **Elizabeth I** ascended the throne in 1558 that he would regain the title of Marshal but in fact it was not restored until 1565.

His friend **Conn Bacach O'Neill** died in 1559 and Conn's heir, his son **Shane**, declared himself King of Ulster. By 1566 **Shane** had occupied Newry and expelled the garrison there. In the summer of that year the Irish withdrew from Newry and **Sir Nicholas** was able to reoccupy his lands.

**Sir Nicholas** held the office of Marshal for twenty-five years and used his influence to rebuild Newry. About 1568 he built a castle on the site of the original Abbot's House attached to the Cistercian Monastery and in 1578 he built St Patrick's Church, which was the first purpose built Protestant church in Ireland. He was buried in this church within a year of his resignation as Marshal.

## ACTIVITIES

1. Why did **Nicholas Bagenal** flee to Ireland?
2. Who employed him as a military adviser?
3. Who petitioned **Henry VIII** through the council in Ireland to obtain a pardon for his crime in England?
4. How was he able to become a tenant of the Cistercian abbey in Newry? How long was his tenure and how much was his annual rent? Was he able to change the duration of the tenure in order that he could keep it for the duration of his life and that of his descendants?
5. Were his efforts to promote trade and improve farming methods appreciated by his neighbouring lords, the Gaelic chiefs and kings?
6. How did he use his influence to rebuild Newry?
7. Are you able to find Bagenal's Castle and St. Patrick's Church on the artist's impression?





# SIR HENRY BAGENAL ( 1556-98 )

**Sir Henry Bagenal** was Marshal of the English army in Ireland under **Queen Elizabeth1st** and Chief Commissioner of Ulster. He is remembered today for losing the important **Battle of the Yellow Ford** ( 1598 ) - the worst defeat of English forces in Ireland and failing to stop his youngest sister **Mabel**, from eloping with his arch enemy Hugh O'Neill, or having her marriage declared invalid.

Sir Henry was the eldest son of **Sir Nicholas Bagenal** from England and a Welsh noblewoman **Eleanor Griffiths**. He had two brothers and six sisters. **Mabel**, the youngest, was later to embarrass him by marrying his Irish enemy the **Great Hugh O'Neill**, the 2nd Earl of Tyrone.

**Henry** left Oxford where he was an under-graduate to join his father, **Sir Nicholas**, who was Marshal of the English forces in Ireland. In 1577 when his father was appointed Chief Commissioner of Ulster, **Henry** became his assistant and was knighted in 1578 at **Athlone**.

In 1577 he married **Eleanor Savage** a noblewoman from Cheshire and had four sons and six daughters ( with her and by later marriages ).

In 1586 he became a Member of Parliament for Anglesey, North Wales but in 1587 became his father's deputy and then Marshal of the army in Ireland in 1590. He was also a member of Dublin Privy Council—the centre of English rule in Ireland. He succeeded his father as Chief Commissioner of Ulster in 1591 but his power was undermined by the English Government's policy of trying to make an ally of the powerful O'Neill family—**Sir Henry** saw **Hugh O'Neill** as his greatest enemy in Ireland and his family as traitors to the Crown.

Picture his horror when, in 1591, his youngest sister **Mabel** ( aged 20 ) eloped with and married **Hugh O'Neill** ( then 41 and newly widowed ). **Sir Henry** had tried to stop the match, refused to pay over the dowry and tried to have the marriage declared invalid—without success. Poor **Mabel** quickly became disillusioned with her husband's way of life and his open unfaithfulness. She had no children and died in unknown circumstances in 1596.

**Hugh O'Neill** expected to rule his lands in the Newry area without English interference if he pledged allegiance to the Crown and fought battles for it in Ireland. Eventually he realised that the English would not allow him to govern independently and in 1595 renounced his English title of 2nd Earl of Tyrone to become “ **O'Neill Mor** ” ( the Great O'Neill ) - a Gaelic prince. The Nine Years War ensued with O'Neill uniting other Irish lords against English rule and championing the cause of Roman Catholicism. Irish forces lacked conventional training and artillery to match the English army but used their knowledge of the countryside to successfully chase, ambush and trap their foes.

In 1598 **Sir Henry** led an army to relieve the **Blackwater Fort** near Armagh. He was badly defeated and killed at the **Battle of the Yellow Ford** - the worst defeat of English forces by the Irish. After the Nine Years War and defeat at the **Battle of Kinsale** (1601) **Hugh O'Neill** felt vulnerable despite a Royal Pardon in 1603. In the Flight of the Earls he went to the continent in 1607 and died in Rome in 1616.



## ACTIVITIES

1. Look at the Coat of Arms of the Bagenal family and the portrait of Hugh O'Neill. What sort of image do you have of the two families ?
- 2.
2. Why was Sir Henry angry about Mabel's marriage to Hugh O'Neill ?
3. Why was Mabel unhappy in her marriage to Hugh O'Neill ?
4. What had Hugh hoped to achieve by helping his English rulers at first ?
5. How were Irish forces able to defeat the well-trained and better armed English troops ?



# The Great Hugh O'Neill

In 1542, **Hugh O'Neill's** grandfather, **Conn**, was one of the first Irish chieftains to take up the offer of "Surrender and Regrant" from **Henry VIII**. This meant that all his lands were given to the English Crown and then returned to him if he promised to live by the English Law. These lands included a large part of Tyrone and most of Armagh.

**Hugh** was born in 1550. When he was nine years old he was taken to England and brought up in the new Protestant religion. This was to try to make sure that the Chieftains would obey the English King. He returned to Ireland when he was 18 years old. At this time he was loyal to the English and was rewarded by the title of the Earl of Tyrone.

His neighbour, **Red Hugh O'Donnell**, ruled not only Donegal but as far down as Sligo. Between them the two lords controlled a large part of the north and west of Ireland. **O'Neill** married **Siobhan, O'Donnell's** sister, after his divorce from his first wife.

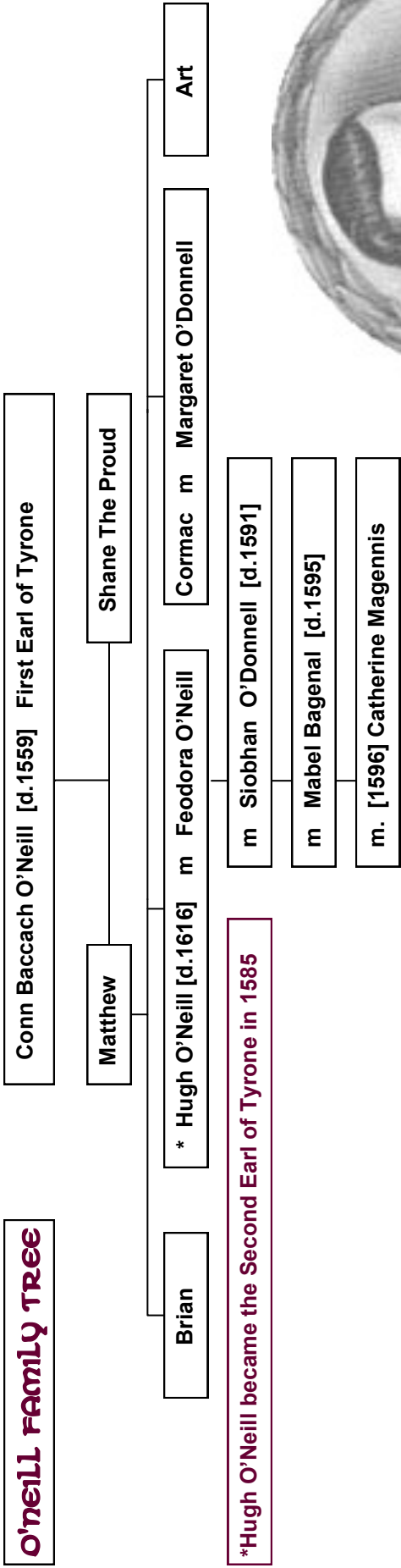
When **Siobhan O'Donnell** died, O'Neill married **Mabel Bagenal**, the sister of Marshall **Sir Henry Bagenall**, who was Commander of the Queen's Army in Ireland. **Hugh O'Neill** was still loyal to the English at this time but he secretly supported the Irish rebels. In 1595 he fought with them at Monaghan. After this victory he was proclaimed traitor by the English.

**Hugh O'Neill** became the leader of the Irish in the Nine Years War. He had many successes in the early years but it was his victory at the "Battle of the Yellow Ford" that outraged **Queen Elizabeth**. She sent the **Earl of Essex** with 16000 men to deal with "the Irish Problem". **Essex** met **O'Neill** and his army near Crossmaglen. They agreed to cease hostilities. **Essex** returned to England. **Elizabeth** was furious. **Essex** was tried for treason and beheaded.

**O'Neill** and **O'Donnell** asked help from the Catholic **King Phillip II** of Spain in the war against the English and in 1601 a Spanish force of 4,000 men landed in Kinsale. The Irish had to march south--- the whole length of Ireland but the Irish lost this last battle. This signalled the end of the War.

**In 1607 Hugh O' Neill made the decision to leave Ireland in order to raise a new army in Spain and return as soon as possible to free his native land.**

## O'neill Family Tree



Hugh O'Neill

## ACTIVITIES

1. Look at the O'Neill family tree above and find the names of Hugh O'Neill's second and third wives. Do you think that these marriages were useful to him as Chief of his Clan? In what way?
2. Hugh's grandfather surrendered his lands to King Henry the VIII. What reason is given for this?
3. Why was Hugh taken to England to be educated?
4. When did Hugh O'Neill decide to leave Ireland? Why did he leave? Did he intend to return?

# IRISH RESISTANCE AND THE NINE YEARS WAR

**H**ugh O'Neill was educated in England and in the early part of his life was loyal to the English Crown, even fighting against his own people. But by 1590 he had gathered together an army of men and weapons to use when he finally rebelled against the English.



*Albrecht Durer : Irish Kerns : 1521*

To build up this army he trained his own men and recruited many “Kerns” who were travelling Irish fighters. He also brought in to his country many Scots soldiers known as the Gallowglass, who used axes to fight. He obtained lead to fix his roof, but instead used it to make bullets. He made friends with many of the lesser Clans who supported him in his cause.

IN 1595 he rebelled against the queen and was declared a traitor by the English. He fought many successful battles in the **Nine Years War** but the “Battle of Yellow Ford” was his finest achievement. His “Hit and Run” tactics made good use of his knowledge of the countryside and his fame as a great leader grew. Even the Earl of Essex and 16,000 men sent to Ireland by Queen Elizabeth could not defeat him.

However, when the King of Spain sent 4000 of his army to Ireland to help O'Neill, he lost the battle. This was mostly due to his army having to march nearly 300 miles in the winter time from the North of Ireland to Kinsale to attack the English, who were besieging the Spaniards there.

This marked the end of the War and though the English Crown pardoned the Irish Lords at the “**Treaty of Mellifont**” they were constantly harassed by the Government and parts of their lands confiscated. They were even threatened by imprisonment and execution.

In 1607, when King James I sent for him to go to London, Hugh O'Neill feared for his life. He decided to leave Ireland and go to Spain in order to raise a new army and return as soon as possible to free his native Land.

The Earl of Fermanagh had bought a ship in France and recruited a crew to sail it to Ireland, pretending it was a cargo ship carrying wine and fishing nets

**On 14<sup>th</sup> September 1607, Hugh O'Neill, the Earl of Tyrone and the Earls of Donegal and Fermanagh and their families, 99 passengers in all, boarded the ship and set sail for La Corunna in Spain.**



## ACTIVITIES

1. Below you will see some of the words that have been used to describe Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone. Choose 5 of these qualities which you think contributed most to his success as a great leader. Give the reasons for your choice.  
**cunning - charming - courageous - ambitious - reckless - two faced - devious - loyal - able politician - terrific energy - irresistible personality**
2. How did Hugh O'Neill prepare for war without the English knowing about it?  
Where did "Kerns and "Gallowglass" come from?
3. What is the reason given for the Irish defeat at Kinsale. Can you find Kinsale on the map of Ireland?
4. Why did the Earls decide to leave Ireland and seek refuge in Spain?  
Give 2 reasons.



*Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone*

## The Flight of The Earls 14<sup>th</sup> September 1607

**I**t was thanks to Connaught Maguire that a boat was moored in Lough Swilly ready to take the Earls and their families to Spain when the decision was made to leave Ireland. The Earl of Tyrone, **Hugh O'Neill**, set off from Slane with all speed for Rathmullan in Donegal where they were met by **Rory McDonnell**, the Earl of Tyrconnel, **Maguire**, the Earl of Fermanagh, and many of their followers.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> September 1607 all 99 passengers boarded the ship and set sail for La Corunna in Spain. Three days later they encountered a violent storm which lasted 13 days. Thinking they had been blown off course, they changed direction and made for France. [Actually they were within 30 miles of the coast of Spain when they turned back]

They landed at Quilleboeuf 21 days after they had left Ireland. The Spanish authorities wrote to advise them that they should proceed to Spanish Flanders [now Belgium] and over-winter there. The Archduke greeted them most royally with banquets and entertainments. **Philip III** of Spain then urged them to travel to Milan, a Spanish State in Italy. The Earls thought they could travel by ship across the Mediterranean to Spain from there.

In Luxemburg they were met with generous hospitality. In Germany and Switzerland the welcome they received was determined by whether or not the town was Catholic or Protestant. On St. Patrick's Day 1608 the group were crossing an Alpine pass, known as the "Devil's Bridge" when a pack horse carrying most of their money plunged into a raging river. The Governor of Milan welcomed them with great hospitality, wining and dining them for three whole weeks. The Spanish King's decision that they should go to Rome and not to Spain was a bitter disappointment.

When they arrived at Rome, in the Papal State, they were met by fifteen horse-drawn carriages to take them to the "palace" the Pope provided for them. They were celebrated as champions of the Catholic cause in Ireland.

Unfortunately, soon afterwards Young **Rory O'Donnell** died from a bout of malaria, as did his brother **Caffer**. **Hugh O'Neill's** son and heir **Hugh**, the Baron of Dungannon, was taken ill and died as did **Connaught Maguire**.

**Nevertheless over the following years Hugh O'Neill made many attempts to raise an army and return to Ireland to claim his lands, all to no avail. He never saw Ireland again and died in Rome in 1616.**

## ACTIVITIES

1. Give the names of the 3 Earls who left Donegal on a boat heading for Spain in 1607.
2. Look at the map of the journey made by the Earls . Name the countries they passed through.
3. During the journey some countries welcomed them and some did not. Why?
4. At that time Italy was not a single country but was made up of several States. Find the two States mentioned in the text.
5. Do you think things would have been different in Ireland if the Earls had not fled to Europe? Explain.

